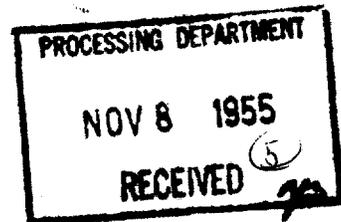




THE FOREIGN SERVICE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

October 27, 1955



Mr. Lewis C. Coffin
Assistant Director, Processing Department
Library of Congress
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Lewis:

This letter is a continuation of my report of last week which I interrupted in order to make the pouch.

Simply to continue where I left off, after returning to Moscow I left for Kiev, Rostov, Tiflis, and Baku. The book buying I was able to do in Kiev was the most successful of any I have done so far. I bought all the non-technological publications of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences I could find plus significant parts of scholarly publications of various Ukrainian and Caucasian universities and academies. All this was purchased in the Academy of Sciences book store in Kiev, which is well stocked and much of ~~which~~ material is not available in Moscow. I also secured copies of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences catalog for 1955 for L.C. and for the universities. If there are titles in the catalog which you do not have or which I did not buy (you will know which titles I got when the books reach you in about a month), I think it will be possible to order these titles from Mezh-kniga. I say, "I think," because I have not yet had time to ask Mezh-kniga whether they will take orders for books published outside of Moscow and not easily obtainable here. However, in view of their co-operative attitude on other matters, and in view of the fact that Academy of Sciences publications are easier to order from the provinces than other books, the chances are very good that Mezh-kniga will co-operate. I will let you know about this definitely before you receive the catalog. I will also send to you and to the universities copies of an older catalog of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences covering the last few years. Most of the books listed there, if you do not have them, you can now only get on exchange from the Academy of Sciences library, if they have extra copies of them.

In Kiev I also visited the university and the local Academy of Sciences. The reception I got at the university was cordial in the extreme. They have received very few American publications in the past 15 years, and now that at last they have permission to exchange directly with American institutions they are extremely eager to do so. Unfortunately, they had no printed catalog of their publications, but they amount roughly to this: A well-developed series of Uchenye Zapiski and monographic editions, which are put out only by the most important universities. All this, of course, is available on exchange. Also the university agreed to do what Tashkent agreed to, that is, to

- 2 -

subscribe to local Ukrainian newspapers, magazines, reviews, etc. in return for subscriptions to American newspapers and periodicals. Within the next two or three weeks I will send along copies of all the Ukrainian non-learned periodicals I was able to buy and to which the University of Kiev would be willing to subscribe for American libraries. In return they would like to receive such things as The New York Times, the Washington Post, Foreign Affairs, etc. As in Tashkent, the willingness of the university to do this is explained by the eagerness of the faculty to receive certain publications from America. It is very difficult for Soviet libraries, except the Lenin Library and the Union Academy of Sciences, to obtain foreign currency to subscribe to these periodicals themselves; therefore they are practically obliged to exchange. On the other hand, although Mezh-kniga sells subscriptions to some provincial periodicals, it by no means sells subscriptions to all; therefore exchange is the only way for us to acquire a significant part of what we want. Of course, as in Tashkent, I committed no one to such an exchange except Harvard, who I know is interested. I simply said that L.C. and the other libraries might be interested and you ~~could~~ do what you want about it. In any event, the university is very eager to start exchanges and I took the liberty of telling them that they would soon have a letter on this subject from you. [The only specific item that they mentioned in connection with L.C. was the minutes of the Senate Committees on Foreign Affairs and Appropriations.] They will probably ask you for these plus a few other government documents, although by no means the whole set. (Incidentally, in my last letter I forgot to mention that the university in Tashkent is interested in acquiring the minutes of the same committees.) In view of the university's eagerness to obtain American material I also think that they would be willing to purchase for American libraries not only Ukrainian periodicals, but also publications of the various Ukrainian ministries, or simply of the local state publishing house. Unfortunately, I was unable to investigate very well just how considerable the local output is, both because of lack of time and because the main non-academic book store was closed for inventory while I was in Kiev. However, the lack of accessibility to foreign currency of the universities, and in general of the smaller libraries, makes exchange the logical way to do business with them; since their appetite for American books is growing, I think most of them would be willing to acquire local publications for us on a fairly large scale. This was the very distinct impression I received in Tashkent and Kiev, and, as you will see below, in Tiflis.

The visit to the Academy of Sciences in Kiev was rather disappointing. Although the Academy of Sciences in Tashkent, Alma-Ata, and also in Tiflis were willing to exchange directly with American libraries, and explicitly stated they had permission to do so, the Academy of Sciences in Kiev said that it was unable to exchange directly and could exchange only through Leningrad. This seems rather mysterious to me, since all the universities and academies of sciences I visited have stated that direct exchanges are now allowed. Why Kiev should be an exception I don't know. It may be that the

- 3 -

other institutions I visited, because they are smaller than Kiev, and until now have had almost no exchanges, either direct or indirect, with the West, are simply inexperienced and don't know what they are doing, whereas Kiev, which has always received material from the outside, knows better what the rules and procedures are; or it may be that through some oversight Kiev has not been informed that policy has changed in the past three months; or it may be that because Kiev is the third largest book center in the Soviet Union that the Ministry of Culture has made an exception in its case and decided to keep its exchanges under centralized control. I don't think that the first supposition is true, because Soviet organizations are very cautious and would never commit themselves to direct exchanges (some of them such as Kazan have already started such exchanges) unless they had explicit permission to do so. Which of the other suppositions is true, if either, I just don't know. In any event, the Kiev Academy of Sciences said that it was quite eager to exchange with America, and that its whole list of publications was available for this purpose, but that it would continue to exchange through Leningrad. When I go back to Leningrad in November I will let them know that American libraries would prefer to exchange directly with Kiev, and ask if something might be done.

From Kiev I went to Rostov, where I spent only one day. The day was a Sunday, so it was impossible to call at the university. However, at the book store they told me that the university publishes only its Uchenye Zapiski, and this not too regularly. The book store had no university publications in stock; Rostov is rather obviously not a very important publishing or intellectual center. However, what they do have they would most probably be willing to exchange, the way the other universities are; therefore, a letter to them would probably bring positive results. In Rostov I bought all of the local publications I could find and they were not numerous, as you will see when you receive them in another month or two.

From Rostov I went to Tiflis, with a stop-over in Sochi to see the sights. In Tiflis I visited both the university and the Academy of Sciences. Both stated quite unequivocally that they had permission to exchange directly with the West, and both are very interested to do so. As in Tashkent and Kiev, the university agreed to subscribe to local publications and purchase locally printed books for American libraries on the same basis as the universities of Tashkent and Kiev. The Academy of Sciences also said its entire list of publications was available on exchange. To both university and the Academy of Sciences I promised that they would soon have letters from you and from the six universities about establishing exchanges. In the case of the universities I said that each would send its catalog; in the case of L.C. I simply said that you would write. However, the Academy of Sciences said that they intended to ask you for some sort of bibliography of American publications, since like most provincial centers in the Soviet Union

- 4 -

they are pretty much in the dark about what is printed in the States. In Tiflis I also made large purchases, both in the Academy book store and in the principal general book store, of material printed both in Georgia and in Armenia. The output of books in Tiflis is quite large, somewhat behind Kiev, but ahead of Tashkent; in other words, one of the most important provincial book centers in the Soviet Union. As in Tashkent and Alma-Ata, both the university and the Academy of Sciences are relatively recent foundations; as in Central Asia, both are growing very fast and their book output is growing correspondingly. The publications of the Academy of Sciences are already quite numerous (third largest among the academies of the Soviet Union, to my knowledge) and are increasing each year. In other words, it is none too soon to ^{start} exchanges; they are eagerly awaiting your letter.

From Tiflis I went to Baku. In Baku I only had one day, since my plane ticket back to Moscow was already bought and I didn't want to risk a long delay in trying to change it. Due to lack of time I didn't get either to the university or the Academy of Sciences. However, I don't think this is any great loss, since neither of them is as important as the corresponding institutions in Tiflis. I had heard this before I arrived and the small quantity of their publications in the book stores bore out the fact. All the same, judging from my experience with other universities and academies, I am sure they would respond favorably to any offer of exchange from us. Although Baku is not a very great publishing center, except for material in Azerbaijani and on the local oil industry, it has excellent book stores in which it is often possible to find material published in Moscow or Leningrad but already sold out in the cities. In particular, the Knizhnyi Passazh is an excellent store, to my knowledge one of the two or three largest in the Soviet Union. I spent most of my time there and acquired a rather large quantity of material published both in the Caucasus and in Moscow, which we most probably don't have.

From Baku I returned directly to Moscow. While in the Caucasus I discovered that I could have gone to Erevan if I had wanted (in Moscow I had not been told this), but I decided against it since at that point I was simply not up to another two nights in a Russian train. Travel in this country is both exasperating and exhausting, and after six weeks of it I had had enough. In addition, I had already bought a rather large quantity of Armenian publications in Tiflis and Baku, which made it somewhat less necessary to visit the book stores in Erevan; also, in view of my experience in other universities and academies, I am sure that the corresponding institutions in Erevan are willing to exchange and that this could be started without my paying a visit to them. However, I would advise you to write to them first and not to wait for them to propose exchanges, since my experience with provincial institutions has indicated that, although they have permission to exchange, they don't know very well how to go about it, and consequently are not inclined to take the initiative.

- 5 -

To sum up the impressions gathered in my travels, I think that the following generalizations hold. First, the only important book publishing centers outside of Moscow and Leningrad are the capitals of the various Soviet Republics: Kiev, Tiflis, Tashkent, Baku, etc., and I am sure Minsk, although I have not been there. Of these, far and away the most important is Kiev, and then, some distance after, Tiflis and Tashkent. The provincial cities of the Russian Republic, such as Gorki, Kuibyshev, Kazan, Rostov, and also I am sure Kharkov and Odessa, are not very important centers. Almost all of the high class and worthwhile material put out by their learned institutions appears in the publications of the central Academy of Sciences or in one or another branch of the state publishing house. That small fraction of the provincial output which does not appear at the center appears in the Uchenye Zapiski of the various universities and these you will soon be receiving. In other words, what really counts is Moscow, Leningrad, and the capitals of the various Soviet Republics. Second, all of the provincial institutions I visited, with the exception of the Kiev Academy of Sciences, are willing, and indeed eager, to exchange directly with America. Moreover, since most of these institutions are both recent in foundation and inexperienced in dealing with the outside, we would probably get better results if we took the initiative in writing to them, than if we waited for them to write to us. Third, although I know it is somewhat unwise to believe too much in Russian promises, the impression I have gained, both in the provinces and in Moscow, is that the government is at present quite deeply committed to renewing cultural contact with the outside, in particular with America. I may be sticking my neck out, but I think we can take them at their word. Of course, the line may change any time, but such a change certainly doesn't seem imminent at present. It is my opinion that we would be mistaken to judge the present situation in terms of our unpleasant experiences with Russian libraries over the last ten years. Finally, I think that the main difficulties in getting books out of the Russians at present will come from the inefficiency and the limited facilities for answering our requests, rather than from deliberate obstructionism. For instance, the question of microfilms: In the course of my travels I discovered that neither Tiflis nor Tashkent had independent microfilming facilities, and that a request for microfilm from them would involve sending the item in question to Moscow. Outside of the Lenin Library and the Academy of Sciences in Leningrad, the only library with independent microfilming facilities is the Academy of Sciences in Kiev, at least in my experience. Moreover, this morning at the Lenin Library I learned that although they can make microfilms, they can't make photostats. In other words, library equipment, like everything else here, is primitive by American standards. As long as the present cultural rapprochement line continues, our difficulties in dealing with Soviet libraries will most probably come from such causes.

To bring you up to date on what I have been doing since I have returned to Moscow I will first explain my cable of last week.

- 6 -

Back in August when I first called at the Lenin Library I was met in formal session by the director, the assistant director, and the lady in charge of exchanges. (This is usual procedure whenever you visit an institution in this country; all business has to be transacted through the top.) The first thing the director asked was what specific business I wanted to discuss, both for the Library of Congress and for the universities. Since I had no specific instructions I simply said that the American libraries were very desirous of obtaining Knizhnaia Letopis and at least one set of the back numbers from 1947 to 1955. They said they would look into this matter, and then they produced a list of questions for me. The first of these concerned the possibility of acquiring manufacturers' catalogs from you; the second concerned what they interpreted to be L.C.'s refusal to take material in the humanities and the social sciences from them; and the third concerned their request for literature on library science and techniques. All I said was that I would transmit these requests to you. I did not particularly want to get into the subject of your exchanges with them beyond the question of Knizhnaia Letopis. But since they brought these matters up and since, as I have already said, they took the letter from Mr. Mumford very seriously, I felt that I had to give them some sort of answer, both to justify my visit and the letter, and in order to facilitate agreement on Knizhnaia Letopis. I also told them that I would return to see them around the middle of October to reply to these questions and receive their answer on Knizhnaia Letopis. I had also given them a rather sizeable list of items to be microfilmed for the universities, principally Harvard, and I wanted to find out what progress they were making with this. I returned once to see them in late September, at which time they said they would send Knizhnaia Letopis as of the first of next year and came through with some of the microfilms for Harvard, particularly the microfilming of old issues of Pravda. The reason for the telegram, then, was to have something to say when I return the second time in order to prod them some more regarding the back numbers of Knizhnaia Letopis and the microfilms for Harvard. As I found out, microfilming here is slow and I felt that if I waited too long the job might not be done before I left.

I received your telegram yesterday and returned to see the assistant director of Lenin Library and the woman in charge of exchanges this morning, since to have waited any longer might have made them wonder whether I was coming back at all. Without, of course, showing them the telegram, I informed them of its contents. As regards exchanges with them in the humanities and the social sciences, they maintain that they were under the very definite impression that you did not want such material and seemed surprised to learn that this was not the case. As regards your inability to supply them with manufacturers' catalogs, they claimed that you had done this in the past. I suggested, indirectly, that your inability or unwillingness to do so now might be connected with their past refusals to send you material, in particular such things as Knizhnaia Letopis. I also told them that a letter was on its way

and that the matter would be clearer once it had arrived. As regards the back numbers of Knizhnaia Letopis, they said, to quote them literally, "The question is not yet clear," which could either mean that they are deliberately stalling, or that such a large microfilming job would place a big strain on their facilities. (They claim they have no surplus copies of these back numbers.) In short, the interview was rather uncomfortable and inconclusive.

I hope that the situation will not create any difficulties for you in your dealings with the Lenin Library. I don't think so since they are obviously under government instructions to increase their American acquisitions, which means co-operating with American libraries. My intention was not to get into such problems; they were thrust upon me simply by the fact of my having to have dealings with the Lenin Library. I don't know what you want to do about the questions raised; perhaps you would prefer to write to them directly; perhaps you would want to send me more detailed instructions as to what to say to them; perhaps the whole matter will be cleared up when the letter mentioned in your cable arrives. In any event, I will wait for further instructions from you before doing anything further. In the meantime, because of your suggestion that the Lenin Library write to the manufacturers concerned, I suggested that they write to the N.A.M. I, of course, have no idea as to how the N.A.M. will react. However, if the N.A.M. reacts negatively, but if you could get these catalogs from the N.A.M., you might propose to the Lenin Library to exchange these catalogs for back numbers of Knizhnaia Letopis, as well as for the other Soviet bibliographies you enclosed in your last letter. I have looked over this list and from my experience it would be impossible to obtain the bibliographies in the book stores. As far as I can see the only place you could get them would be from the Lenin Library, and since they haven't yet said, "Yes," on the back numbers of Knizhnaia Letopis, I doubt that they would say, "Yes," to the other bibliographies you desire, especially since all of them extend rather far back into the past. The Lenin Library is extremely eager to get these manufacturers' catalogs, and you might want to propose to them trading the American catalogs for the Soviet bibliographies. Of course, without instructions from you I will not make any such proposal.

If I have time I may also go to Minsk, the only significant book center I have not visited

I will spend the rest of my stay in the Soviet Union in Moscow except for a short trip to Leningrad early in November. Although you have not had any book shipments from me for some time, you will start receiving them again in the near future. The reason for this is that for the last six weeks I have been travelling and buying books in the provinces. These books are now beginning to arrive in Moscow and I shall get them out as fast as they come, together with new purchases. Books shipped from the provinces to Moscow take a month or often six weeks to arrive, and this is the main reason I wanted to get my travelling out of the way relatively early in my stay. Consequently, most of the books I bought will be sent towards the end of my stay here and will arrive pretty much in a bunch, but there was no way to space them more evenly. I don't know yet when the next shipment will go out, because there is only one man at the

- 8 -

Embassy to wrap books, and since my shipments are in excess of the regular shipments, he can take care of them only after hours. I will send a separate letter to Frank Henshaw as soon as the next shipment is ready.

Sincerely,

M. Martin

Martin E. Malia

P.S. In the interests of speed you may wish to answer via Helsinki. The address is simply Mr. Roye Lowry
American Embassy
Helsinki.

Send the letter by the regular air mail, and it will be pouched in from Helsinki.